

The Musical World

FINE ART & DRAMATIC OBSERVER.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1889.

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SPECIAL NOTICES.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

As already announced, the Proprietors of THE MUSICAL WORLD offer three prizes of £12. 12s., £5. 5s., and £3. 3s. respectively for the three best settings of the Nicene Creed. We now give the Rules of the Competition:—

- 1.—Only British subjects and citizens of the United States of America will be entitled to compete.
- 2.—Correct accentuation of the words and sentences of the Creed (for which see the Rev. Mr. Harford's articles in THE MUSICAL WORLD of August 3 and 10) being the main object for which these prizes are offered, accuracy in these particulars will be regarded as a *sine qua non*, and the prizes will be awarded to the three best works in order of musical merit.
- 3.—Works already published will not be eligible.
- 4.—Compositions must be written in the usual four parts (S.A.T.B.) for the use of church choirs, and should not exceed six and a half minutes in performance.
- 5.—M.S.S., of which two clearly written copies must be sent not later than the 17th of October to the Editor of THE MUSICAL WORLD, must bear a motto or *nom de plume* identical with one on a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the writer. Only the letters of the successful competitors will be opened.
- 6.—The judges will be Dr. GEORGE C. MARTIN, Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral; Dr. JOSEPH C. BRIDGE, Organist of Chester Cathedral (who have in the kindest manner accepted this responsibility); and the Editor of THE MUSICAL WORLD.
- 7.—The copyright of the successful works will remain the property of the composers; but the proprietor reserves the right to publish one edition of each.

HINTS FOR THOSE ABOUT TO SET THE NICENE CREED.

- 1.—Let there be a leading phrase for the Priest.
- 2.—Do not place a rest between the words 'God' and 'The FATHER Almighty.'
- 3.—In 'visible' and 'invisible' the accent should fall upon the 1st syllable of the last word.
- 4.—Shew reverence for the Sacred Name 'JESUS.'
- 5.—Properly accentuate 'Only begotten SON.'
- 6.—Avoid two faults in 'God of God.'
- 7.—Keep distinct 'The FATHER' from 'By whom.'
- 8.—Avoid 'came down.'
- 9.—Accentuate the first syllable in 'also.'
- 10.—Avoid 'rose again.'
- 11.—In 'the third day' the accent must fall on 'third.'
- 12.—Do not accentuate 'to' in 'according to.'
- 13.—The accent is on Right in Right Hand.
- 14.—Avoid 'again with glory' and 'with glory to judge.'
- 15.—Keep 'the dead' distinct from 'Whose Kingdom.'
- 16.—Avoid accent on 'shall' in 'Kingdom shall have.'
- 17.—Shew reverence for the Name of The HOLY SPIRIT.
- 18.—Dwell on 'The LORD.'
- 19.—Be careful in 'The SON, Who with The FATHER and The SON.'
- 20.—Place the accent correctly in 'I acknowledge.'
- 21.—Avoid 'together is worshipped.'
- 22.—Do not emphasise the personal pronoun in 'I believe.'
- 23.—Do not dwell upon 'look' in 'look for.'
- 24.—At the same time do not accentuate 'for.'

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The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1889.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

* * * The Business Departments of the MUSICAL WORLD are now under the management of Mr. L. V. Lewis, the Manager of "The Observer," 396, Strand, to whom all communications must be addressed. Remittances should be made payable to the Proprietors.

* * * All advertisements for the current week's issue should be lodged with the Printer not later than noon Thursday.

* * * MSS. and Letters intended for publication must be addressed to THE EDITOR. Rejected MSS. cannot be returned unless accompanied by stamped directed envelope.

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FACTS AND COMMENTS.

The new departure in theatrical decoration inaugurated by the directors of the Promenade Concerts now being held at Her Majesty's Theatre opens up a vista of remarkable possibilities. The next step will be, of course, that all the promenaders will appear in Elizabethan costumes, to harmonise better with the quaint decorations. In time the practice will spread to our theatres, so that the decorations of the auditorium and the costumes of the audience will be brought into chronological agreement with the play. The Lyceum, for instance, will be re-upholstered, and made to seem the hall of a Scottish chieftian's castle, and all the gentlemen in the stalls will appear in kilts so long as "Macbeth" is on the boards. When a new piece is brought forward corresponding changes will be carried out. Perhaps the changes will not be entirely popular with the occupants of the gallery and the pit, and since, as we all know, dramatic art exists chiefly for the benefit of these, perhaps there may be some delay in carrying out the revolution.

The "Daily Telegraph" of Monday last contained an article on the Bayreuth Festival which should not have escaped the notice of our readers. Certainly the columns of that journal have never contained any criticism at once so just and so eulogistic as this, in which Wagner is spoken of in terms of the highest praise. Very much to the point is the following sentence, which is directed against a popular error:—"Nothing is more fallacious than the idea that the great Wagnerian rôles of the later dramas do not call for perfect vocal accomplishment. No one deplored more than Wagner himself the want of style and finish displayed by many typical Wagnerian singers, and no one more gladly welcomed these advantages when combined with the all-important qualities of simplicity and that absence of self-consciousness so hard to find in dramatic singers of high accomplishment."

Somewhat less just are the remarks concerning the "esoteric" followers of the Bayreuth master, who are said to "look down with scorn upon the Boeotian ignorance of the outside public." No doubt there is a tendency in this direction in certain circles, but after all this is but the natural consequence of the blind and irrational attacks upon the great music dramas, which have been all too frequent. It seems to be forgotten that there was a time when full appreciation was confined to such a small coterie, and there was consequently no "pretence" about the matter at all. But however this may be, and from whatever source the article in question may emanate, there can be nothing but satisfaction at the appearance of such enlightened and honourable criticism.

We have received an interesting letter from Miss Synge in reference to the question of pianoforte mechanism now being discussed in these columns. After pointing out how frequently it occurs that, by reason of the lack of uniformity in mechanism, the performer has to adapt his own touch to the instrument instead of finding the instrument respond to his touch, Miss Synge draws attention to the method taught by Deppe, who did not approve of *striking* the notes with the finger, but allowed it to fall loosely on the notes, and, instead of turning the thumb under in ascending passages, let it pass easily over the second and third fingers. Miss Synge is in herself evidence of the value of this method, as, although her right arm is contracted at the elbow, she experiences no inconvenience in playing.

The encore question has entered on a new phase, by reason of the possibilities of the phonograph. It has long been a standing grievance with artists—so they say—that, having been engaged to sing two or three songs at a concert, they are often compelled to add one or more as encores. It would be ungracious to ask if they really object to being encored, or whether this reluctance is part and parcel with the modesty of the young ladies who protest too much that they have colds when asked to sing. At any rate, the well-known baritone, Kaschmann, has reason to understand the new phase of the old question. Being at Venice a short while ago, he was invited by Signor Copello, the Italian agent for Mr. Edison's inventions, to sing into the phonograph. Signor Copello straightway took the "phonogram," and reproduced the song at a public *éclat*, by which means he gained some considerable financial benefit. Kaschmann not unnaturally resented this attempt to reap unearned increment, and has brought an action to recover damages from the too-zealous agent. So it may be prophesied that the phonograph will at least serve as a new apple of discord between the already discordant parties, the singers and the public.

Everyone will be glad to learn that there is no truth in the report which has recently been current in some Continental circles that Mme. Christine Nilsson has been attacked with deafness and loss of memory. It must certainly be admitted, however, that the report did not spread far, for it is but a few weeks since that the great artist was seen in London, apparently in the best health. It is asserted, by the way, that Mme. Nilsson proposes shortly to undertake a concert-tour in America. If the news be true—and it must be taken with a large grain of salt—English musicians will have some reasonable cause for jealousy, and will hope for equal favours from the much-worshipped *diva*.

The authorities of the Royal College of Music have done well to republish, in pamphlet form, the programmes of the concerts given by the students during the Midsummer term just finished. The ample variety and the artistic value of all the pieces included, not less than the recollections thus awakened of the manner in which those pieces were performed, are the highest possible testimony to the courage and ability with which Sir George Grove directs the institution at Kensington Gore.

Mr. F. Williams-Williams, who recently took his degree as Bachelor of Music at the University of Trinity College, Toronto, has been awarded the silver medal of that University on account of the excellence of his work as shown by his examination papers. Mr. Williams-Williams was formerly a student at the Guildhall School of Music, and afterwards at the Royal College.

Mme. Hughes Paltzer has been engaged to take part in the new opera "Le Grand Duc," by Signor Tito Mattei, which will be produced at the Avenue Theatre on Oct. 16.

The programme of the Promenade Concert at Covent Garden on Monday next will be largely devoted to excerpts from Wagner's works.

THE BAYREUTH FESTIVAL.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

BAYREUTH, AUGUST 13TH, 1889.

The Bayreuth Festival is fast drawing to a close. The last performance, of which I hope to give a short account, takes place on Sunday, 18th. There will have been nine representations of "Parsifal," five of "Die Meistersinger," and four of "Tristan and Isolde," the final performance of the latter drama being witnessed yesterday by a large and distinguished audience, including a great number of English musicians and critics, amongst whom I noticed specially Madame Nordica, Mr. Frederick Cliffe, Mr. August Manns, the Earl of Dysart (President of the London branch of the Wagner Society), Mr. Ashton Ellis, and several others. The orchestra, under Herr Felix Mottl, was, as it has been at every performance of "Tristan," absolutely perfect. Those who have never heard the Bayreuth orchestra can have no conception of such perfection, for the simple reason that no other place in the world can boast of such acoustic properties as the theatre here. The performers occupy a large space sunk some sixteen feet below the level of the stage, between the stage and auditorium. This space recedes for fifteen feet under the stage, and it is here that the wind is located, a sounding board above the heads of the performers softening the effect of the brass in a way which is unattainable in a London concert room, hence the utter absence in Bayreuth of the "noise" so often complained of by London audiences. Immediately facing the stage, and at the highest point of the orchestra (though still invisible to the audience) stands the conductor, thereby reversing the general custom of the concert room. He is by this means afforded absolute control not only over his orchestra, but over every singer on the stage, to all of whom he is distinctly visible. The theatre and its resources are only some of the many novelties in Bayreuth which

impress the uninitiated. The vast numbers of visitors are in themselves a source of endless interest and entertainment. It is very amusing to see a party of Americans, intent on "doing the thing thoroughly," arrive for the first time in their lives at the top of the theatre hill just before a performance. Top hat, white shirt, and tailcoat well to the fore amongst the sterner sex of the party, airy robes, white kid gloves, and jewels decking their gentler companions. Evidently they are under the impression that they are going to a second edition of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York! Amongst "old stagers" at Bayreuth a top-hat is a thing unknown—the very sight of one proclaims a Philistine and rouses a feeling of hostility towards the unlucky wearer—so at least I judge from the fact that one day whilst waiting for the trombones to summon the audience to "Parsifal" I heard a piteous appeal from one member of the crowd to another to "shy a stone at that top-hat!" Here, at least, music is more thought of than personal adornment, and it really is a relief when one takes one's seat in the vast auditorium to feel that one's next-door neighbour is not intent on dazzling one by the fact that she is struggling through life as a walking advertisement for Messrs. Worth and Streeter. The vast majority of the Bayreuth audience really come for the sake of the music, and it says something for both music and audience that many have come thousands of miles by land and by sea for the sake of hearing Wagner in Wagner's home.

To those who wish to gain a thorough insight into the music, the acting and the general spirit pervading the whole festival, and to hear the opinions of all parties, it is necessary to do as I have done—witness every performance, and after each, instead of adjourning to a fashionable hotel, to descend the hill with the crowd and partake of the "Abendessen" at some such place as the Restauration Koll in the Luitpold Platz, a café much frequented by the chorus and orchestra. Here, besides enjoying as good a supper as can be got anywhere in Bayreuth, one may hear all that is to be heard about the performances, freely discussed by those who are actually engaged therein, over their *seidels* of "Münchener bier" and cigars. There is no doubt whatever that people who come to Bayreuth *merely* for the performances lose a great deal. There is a vast amount to be enjoyed between whiles—even without going to *Fantasie* and the *Eremitage*!—if one has but eyes to see and ears to hear. And what one there sees and hears between the acts, so to speak, only increases one's appreciation of the performances themselves. I have heard it objected that a personal acquaintance with the artists "destroys the illusion" of the drama. I cannot say that this has been my experience. I have found Wagner's genius quite sufficient to entirely obliterate, when witnessing a performance, all personal associations whatsoever, and it must be said in common justice to the great artists engaged that on the majority of them the Master's mantle has descended sufficiently to make them lose all *private* identity when on the stage. So completely is this the case, that when, for instance, I meet Herr Van Dyck in the street, I invariably exclaim "Here's Parsifal!"

AUGUST 16TH.

In my previous notices I have spoken chiefly of the performances. I must now, however, devote a few words to the performers. No praise can be too high for the remarkable way in which the three conductors have fulfilled their labours, and it is a privilege indeed to have heard three of Wagner's greatest works interpreted by such men. Yesterday at the eighth performance of "Parsifal," Herr Levi resigned his *bâton* to his friend Mottl; but the difference was at first hardly perceptible, as Herr Mottl adapted the tempi of Herr Levi, I suppose feeling it wiser to fall in with existing arrangements for the sake of the chorus and orchestra. But I was sorry, as I think the work gains immensely by being taken as slowly as is Herr Mottl's custom. All went well till the final scene, when Herr Mottl's tempo became somewhat slower than the chorus had been accustomed to, and they showed a decided inclination to hurry. This made them nervous, and the result was that the time and tune became obliterated for several bars, till the brass made a bold and unwavering entry, and gathered the straying ones back into the fold. While speaking of the conductors it will not be out of place to mention the orchestra. It would be quite impossible to imagine a finer body of instrumentalists; they have been gathered from all the great centres in Germany and Austria, each man being a proficient on his own particular instrument. *En passant*, have any of my readers observed the almost unique effect of the horns in the Bayreuth orchestra? Whether from their situation or what, I cannot say, but I know that nowhere else does a horn sound as in the Bayreuth theatre.

I must make special mention of those artists who have this year appeared for the first time before a Bayreuth audience. Fraulein Dressler, who in

spite of an announcement that she was to alternate the part of Eva with Frau Reuss Belce, has taken the part throughout, is a young artist of considerable promise. Her greatest fault is a tendency to sing very sharp when excited, but her manner on the stage is quiet and unaffected, and in the first scene of the last act, in which occurs the famous quintet, she is seen at her best. Fraulein Dressler has also done important service this year as one of the solo *Blumen-mädchen* in "Parsifal." Herr Grüning, who has once taken the title rôle in "Parsifal," and once the part of Walther von Stolzing in "Die Meistersinger" seems to me, though giving great promise of rising to almost any height in his profession, to be an artist of very unequal merits. His voice is remarkably fine, and he has a good presence, but his acting is at times, and often at the most critical moments simply weak and without point. Of course, in the two parts taken by him at this Festival, he has laboured under a distinct disadvantage in coming after such men as Van Dyck and Gudehus. As Walther von Stolzing he was specially disappointing in his utter absence of fire and energy, except in the second act, where he came out well in the love-making with Eva. His voice was beautiful throughout, and could someone only have seriously insulted him before singing the Trial Songs and the Preislied there is no doubt whatever that Herr Gudehus would have had to look to his laurels in those particular songs. Much as I admire the latter artist's interpretation of the character of Walther—though certain people accuse him of "swagger"—I cannot but confess that every time I have heard him sing the Preislied this year, it has been positively painful, owing to the fact that he has sung out of tune. Herr Grüning had to fight against one disadvantage in his representation of Parsifal, of which I see the correspondent of the "Star" has made careful note. While disagreeing with the general tone of that article, I admit that there is some justice in what has been said about certain mistakes and failures, and I agree with the writer that the truest upholders of the Wagner cause will be those who criticise unflinchingly such lamentable exhibitions as the "hornpipe" executed by Herr Grüning under pressure of the desperate necessity of disentangling his ankles from the slack of the string on which the spear was presently to fly at him, and the utter failure launch the spear at the fourth performance of "Parsifal," on August 1st, on which occasion Herr Van Dyck, who had never given a grander interpretation of the character, with the greatest presence of mind, saved the play by making the sign of the cross with his hand alone, and walking off victoriously—certainly without the actual, tangible spear, but yet so unmistakably with the spear,—the *soul* of the spear, that as far as he was concerned, Wagner was not allowed to suffer through the unlucky accident. Never had any actor a more glorious opportunity of showing his dramatic power, and this great artist made the most of it.

Now a few words with regard to Herr Perron, who has taken the part of Amfortas alternately with Herr Reichmann. It certainly is a great advantage to a critic to attend several performances of the same drama, that he may have not only the opportunity of comparing different artists in the same rôle, but a chance of seeing the same artist under the influence of various moods. Had I seen Herr Perron only at his first representation of the part of the wounded king, I should have said—"A clever artist, but without either the voice or the dramatic capability for so arduous a part." Far otherwise must be my criticism now. Each time I have seen Herr Perron my admiration and wonderment at his interpretation has steadily increased. I do not at all know what is the prevailing opinion concerning him, but for my own part I have no hesitation in pronouncing him *the* Amfortas. At first his voice, a baritone of very great sweetness, seemed too small for the theatre, which defect, not even the fact that Amfortas is "the strengthless one" could hide. But, at each recurring representation this defect became notably less, the artist began to feel his feet, so to speak, and with the increased control over his voice, his dramatic fervour became also greater and more impressive, till at the performance yesterday—his final appearance in the character, he rose to the very height of dramatic expression, when, standing behind the altar, in the last scene of the first act, he sang—

"Wehe! wehe mir der Qual!—

Mein Vater, oh! noch einmal

Verricht du das Amt!

Lebe! Leb' und lass' mich sterben!"

Nothing could surpass the grandeur with which he declaimed this, the effect upon the whole audience was unmistakable. Herr Perron is engaged at the Leipzig theatre, and I sincerely hope that when "Parsifal" is next performed at Bayreuth he may be cast for the part of Amfortas.

The three representatives of Hans Sachs afford a remarkable instance of

the different way in which artists conceive the same character. In the hands of Herr Gura, the cobbler-poet is a man who, though thwarted in his love, shakes off his sorrow as a brave man will, and leaves one under the impression, when he joins the hands of Eva and Walther, that he has completely conquered himself, and will be happy and contented in the knowledge of their love for one another. Reichmann, whose interpretation of the character is, to my mind, far the most stirring of the three, shows up all the pathetic side of Sachs' nature; with him the love for Eva is a love which one feels, instinctively, will last for life, though bravely and manfully fought against—a love which well-nigh overpowers the gentle, tender-hearted fellow, in spite of his praiseworthy efforts to hide it under the mask of paternal affection. Quite different again is the Hans Sachs of Herr Betz. With him one gets all the childlike simplicity of the man, combined with a certain amount of quiet fatherly dignity, which, while forming a charming and intensely lovable character, is utterly devoid of any kind of pathos whatsoever. Yet each of these men is, in his own particular way, a thorough artist. Gura's voice, though still a grand one, begins to show signs of wear and tear, but his acting is superb. Betz has a splendid voice, but his acting, except in the first scene of the last act, is not impressive. Both as Hans Sachs and as Kurwenal in "Tristan" he gives one the impression of being extremely lovable and affectionate by nature, but whether he be clothed as Sachs or as Kurwenal makes little difference—one loves him just the same, and feels pleased whenever his blue eyes smile and twinkle. Reichmann's acting is dignified and impressive, but though he sings with such feeling that he draws the tears from one's eyes he is not always in tune.

I have already spoken of Frau Staudigl's Brangäne. As Magdalena in "Die Meistersinger" she can but retain her well-earned popularity.

A special word of praise should be accorded to Herr Hofmüller, who, besides playing third esquire in "Parsifal," and the sailor in "Tristan," who sings that indescribably pathetic song in the first act, has taken the part of David at each performance of "Die Meistersinger." He possesses a tenor voice, clear in quality, and sweet in tone, and unlike most German tenors, sings invariably in tune and in time. I might almost say that of all the artists engaged in the Festival Herr Hofmüller has been most unvaryingly good and up to the mark, and his part in "Die Meistersinger" is a most trying one.

Herr Guggenbühler, another very good tenor, has shown to great advantage in all three dramas,—as fourth esquire in "Parsifal," as the shepherd in "Tristan,"—a small part, but one capable of some good acting, as is proved by Herr Guggenbühler—and as Augustin Moser, one of the Meistersinger.

Herr Friedrichs, as Beckmesser, has been quite as good as last year, though now and then he has shown some inclination to overact the part. This is a pity, as his great success in this absurd rôle has been hitherto owing to the fact that his impersonation has not been strained in any way.

Of the two artists who have taken the part of Klingsohr in "Parsifal," I should feel inclined to give the palm to Herr Lievermann. Herr Fuchs has a splendid voice, but as an actor I should consider him less great than Lievermann. The latter artist has always been specially fine in the incantation scene in the second act, and in the harangue at the window of the Zauberschloß when he watches the approach of Parsifal. Besides possessing a very fine voice and considerable dramatic power, Herr Lievermann has also a good figure, and makes a Klingsohr at whom it is impossible to laugh.

Of the Kundry of Materna and Malten I need say little, as both these great artists stand at the head of their profession. Personally I prefer Malten's rendering, not because she is greater as an artist, but because she is smaller as a woman. But of each nothing can be said too warm in praise.

The part of Gurnemanz has been taken by Wiegand, Siehr, and Blauwart. Not one of these can come up to Scaria. Wiegand is in many ways the most satisfactory of the three, though he shares the German partiality for singing out of tune. His gait in the last act, when he appears as a very aged man, is distinctly clever, and he always seems thoroughly at home in the part, which is more than can be said for the others.

One thing Herr Siehr did which I have never seen done by any other Gurnemanz—when, bending over the body of the murdered swan, he says to Parsifal—

"Gebrochen das Aug,' siehst du den Blick?"

he raised the swan's head with his hand, and made it appear to gaze up at Parsifal. The fiery impetuosity with which Parsifal then broke his bow

and threw it and his quiver away for ever became at once a living fact, not a mere theatrical display. Herr Blauwart is a little conventional and stiff, but he has a very good voice.

AUGUST 18TH, SUNDAY.

For days past this picturesque town has been gradually losing its picturesqueness under the hands of its loyal inhabitants, who have been decking their houses from basement to attic with bunting, and huge paper bows of blue and white, and red, white and black stripes, the vulgarity of which is somewhat softened however by the liberal addition of wreaths of evergreen, the material for which has been brought in in cartloads—drawn by oxen—from the pine forests just outside the town. On Friday evening the place presented a very animated appearance. The peasants, in holiday attire, flocked into the town in hundreds, the streets being so densely packed that it was difficult to get along. For a full hour before the Prince Regent was due at the station the whole route to the Neue Schloss was crowded with people who seemed greatly to enjoy the sight of each bright uniform which rode past. At about half-past seven a salute of several guns announced the arrival of the Prince Regent. The procession was a small one consisting of a few private carriages, containing the Regent and his household, and some young girls prettily dressed in quaint old blue and white costumes. The Prince was enthusiastically cheered the whole way along the route, and responded cordially to the loyal expressions of the crowd. On Saturday morning (yesterday) the German Emperor and Empress arrived, and received a warm welcome from the inhabitants. All the royal people attended the performance of "Die Meistersinger," and a great crowd of people assembled outside the theatre after each act in the hope of catching a glimpse of the Kaiser. Nor were they disappointed, for both he and the Empress, and also the Prince Regent appeared at one of the windows, and responded very graciously to the cheers of the people. As a performance yesterday's representation was weak and disappointing. The artists seemed nervous, and I fear that the sense of the royal presence was for the nonce more powerful than the reverence for the Master-mind which created the work. Quite different was the performance of "Parsifal" to-day. It certainly was one of the finest representations of that drama that I have ever witnessed, and I have seen no fewer than fifteen. Van Dyck surpassed himself as Parsifal; the Kundry of Fraulein Malten was, as it ever is with this wonderful artist, a most perfect portrayal of womanhood under all the varying influences of sin, of suffering, of repentance, of final forgiveness and blessing; and Wiegand and Reichmann as Gurnemanz and Amfortas were both better than usual. Space forbids a more detailed account, but I must say that this final performance brought the Festival to a most brilliant close. Strange as it may seem, there are still those who can look upon this greatest of all Wagner's works as a profanation of a sacred subject! The head of the ecclesiastics here would not be present at a single performance for that reason, and I am told that a certain section of people here consider that the unfavourable weather we have had lately, which has been so detrimental to the harvest, is entirely due to the "impious representation of the Liebesmahl" (the Lord's Supper) at the theatre! On the other hand, it is refreshing to notice the presence of many priests and English clergy even at the Sunday performances, a thing which would have been impossible some years ago. Contradictory reports are afloat concerning the date of the next festival and the works to be performed, but I heard to-day from someone, who vouched for the truth of it on the authority of Frau Cosima Wagner herself, that there would be no festival here next year, but that in 1891 "Parsifal" and "Tannhäuser" would be given. But as this year's festival has been a financial success I think it may safely be predicted that Bayreuth will next year see a still larger concourse of pilgrims, and an equally attractive and successful festival, for there is no doubt whatever that in spite of some ignorant opponents Wagner's music is in the ascendant, and will become more and more widely popular as it is more often heard and more seriously studied. Vincit veritas!

To restrain art, to artificialise it, to prevent it from expanding, to confine it in a formula, classical, romantic, realist, idealist, naturalist, or what else, is to lessen it, to misunderstand it, and to make of it a hieratical thing, which may be interesting, but which soon becomes unbearable. Art lives only by diffusion. Big words count for nothing in it—whether one evokes the respect for traditions or the study of nature. Nothing, in the end, is worth anything, but the individual initiative. In art, in religion, in everything, there is nothing fruitful but liberty.—*Max. du Camp.*

LIFE AND ART.

BY SIDNEY B. THOMPSON.

(Continued from page 548).

It is an often quoted saying—so often, indeed, that it is in some danger of losing its force and freshness—that Spenser, had he lived to-day, would not have written the "Faery Queen." Yet a truth becomes not less true on account of its familiarity; and a variation of the thought may be of some value to the present purpose. Let us say, for instance, that Handel, were he living in our own time, could not, and would not, have written the "Messiah." It is needless to assure the devoutly conservative reader that there is here no suggestion that the "Messiah" is anything but a great work, but it is very certain that the revolution through which musical form has passed, no less than our changed spiritual environments, would make the production of such an oratorio absolutely impossible to-day. Its form is completely dead, although the genius with which it, and many others like it, is inspired, may well preserve its vitality for a long while to come. He would be a rash man who should prophesy that the popular appreciation of the masterpieces in this kind will show visible signs of diminution during the present generation; but it is scarcely to be denied that already the most liberal-minded hearer finds some readjustment of focus necessary before he can contemplate these works to the fullest advantage. And this conscious readjustment becomes more necessary every year as we recede farther from the temper in which such forms were possible as the expression of such feelings. Ten—or even five—years ago no Festival Committee would have ventured to exclude from their scheme the "Elijah" or the "Messiah." To-day they are not afraid to do without one or the other, or, where either is included, its performance has not always been, as once it was, the best attended of any. In this connection, too, it is interesting to glance at the various attempts that have been recently made to carry on the oratorio form under the newly-imposed conditions. Within a comparatively short time three works, dealing with sacred subjects, have been produced in England, of which two have been composed by prominent Englishmen, and the third by an Italian. "Ruth," "Judith," and "Isaias" are the compositions in question, and a superficial glance at the method pursued will show that in each the religious element—using the word in its older sense—is strictly subordinated to the humanly dramatic. In the first-named we have the old sweet story of human love, and are presented with what is practically a ballet. The second, also, is a tale of strong human passions—so repulsively human that it may be questioned whether the story might not more fitly have been left unsung. In the third the catastrophe hinges upon a meteorological miracle, which—however it may strike the reader who encounters it in its original literary setting—becomes, under the treatment of Signor Mancinelli and his librettist, quite incredible, and in so far destructive of the effect of the whole. Moreover, the strenuous efforts made towards a compromise between modern sympathies and effete forms are ludicrously inadequate. The loquacious prophesyings of Isaias himself are accompanied by elaborate stage-directions which, since the circumstances forbid their gestural interpretation, are not a little provocative of unholly mirth. Nor is this, as might be urged, entirely the result of want of skill in composer or librettist. Each felt that strong human interest was needful if the suffrages of a modern audience were to be enlisted, and therefore whatever value attaches to "Isaias" comes from the purely human and dramatic contrasts therein presented. On the other hand, the form, however modified, required the introduction of some sacred if not miraculous element, and the result is an utter absence of unity. That is to say, the works are judged purely from the musical standpoint, and not one hearer in a hundred thinks of, or even looks for, the spiritual emotions which ought properly to be experienced in listening to a professedly religious work. And what is this but a restatement of the fact that art, to be of practical value to-day, must concern itself with the more pressing and visible needs of life? It can easily be admitted, indeed, that of all the arts, music can lend herself most readily to the interpretation of purely spiritual or visionary things, since she deals less with concrete symbolism than her sisters. The painter or sculptor must use natural images as vehicles of the truth he would express, although some of the most remarkable instances of modern painting have aimed, by the use of vague dream-like figures, at the production of an emotion or mood rather than of conscious thought. Yet such examples of modern music as may be held to express, directly or indirectly, a spiritual truth

have expressed it in human language. "Parsifal," which may be taken as in many ways the noblest work written in this generation, is undoubtedly full of religious truth and feeling. But, be it noted, it starts from the human side. It is by the sublime simplicity, the purely human tenderness of a man, that redemption is wrought.

(To be continued.)

THE FUNCTION OF MUSIC.

BY ALLAN LAIDLAW.

I.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his able essay on the "Origin and Function of Music," advances a theory which may be briefly stated as follows: Music is the result of emotion; it is primarily vocal; it progresses from recitative to song in the same way that lyric poetry is evolved out of chanted epic narrative. Music progresses with civilisation; but once developed into a formal art it becomes a gradual power in the perfection of that civilisation; a great diffuser of sympathy. Originating in the expression of emotion, its function is the development of the faculties of sympathy. But Mr. Spencer says nothing concerning the evolution of form in music, though in his essay on "The Philosophy of Style" he is very eloquent upon the necessity for form in literature. Form in music is absolutely essential, though it is of less importance how one says a thing than that what one says shall express our highest aspirations. Mr. Spencer is obviously right in saying that the cultivation of music increases the media of sympathy. It predisposes the mind to lofty impressions, and while humanity is getting rid of the insincerity of empty professions and striving to think and act earnestly, it is the function of music to develop the sympathy which makes the happiness of life and corrects the possibly selfish tendencies of intellectual pride. Mr. Ruskin has very clearly stated, that, though art should not be dogmatically didactic yet no art that is vital can have other than a moral tendency; whatever its imperfections, any work of art that possesses real value must spring from a noble mind, a deep nature. Bulwer Lytton, in one of his essays, advances a more probable theory—that the artist is a being with two sides to his character: the Worldly and the Ideal. No great work was ever the result of painful effort, i.e., the effort of a man who was not interested in what he was doing, who did not believe what he said or feel what he did. It is necessary to mention this in an essay on music, because we have to face the fact that many musicians have been immoral* men and a great deal of music has been composed which is absolutely devilish in the sense which expresses all that is contemptible, ignoble, and infectious. But, on the other hand, by studying the lives of great composers we find that they were all men of fine organisation, sensitive in an abnormal degree, and we also discover that the music they produced expressed their temperaments. Thus Handel was a man robust, vigorous, massive; this is all expressed in his music. Mozart was delicate, refined, and sensuously pure. Mendelssohn's music is fiery, with an intensity of pure passion, rich in harmonic colouring and pregnant with emotional idealism. This was the man's nature; his character was singularly beautiful, his life, for a man, marvellously pure. Beethoven's music is like the voice of the "Bound Prometheus." Gounod's music expresses most intensely the passion of love, and is also characterised by a religious enthusiasm almost mediæval. The science of his music is modern, its feeling embodies the faith of the past. A French critic has said that his music is such as would be composed by a "sensuous priest."

These instances are enough to prove that the evolution of musical thought, i.e., the melodic expression of emotion, originates solely in the physical and mental temperaments of the being who thus expresses himself by symbols of sound, instead of by symbols of action or speech, and we know by experience that true symbols of sound arouse reciprocal emotions in all those whose tympani are susceptible to the influence of the regular aerial vibrations which cause musical sound. But also we must admit that all these composers reveal a distinct mannerism of expression similar to the mannerism, or, as some prefer to term it, individuality, exhibited by painters and poets of the lower order of genius; so that it appears that the ideal musician shall be he who does not permit the strength of his general temperament to dominate the force of natural expression. The Shakespeare of Music has yet to be born. We likewise know, that as the violin or piano betray in the highest degree the texture of mind of the player upon them, so a

* I use this word in the sense of high principle, not as implying occasional acts of folly or error.

vulgar-minded composer will always produce vulgar melodic sequences. From the following passage in Herbert Spencer's "Philosophy of Style" it will be seen that the most perfect artist is he who has the greatest catholicity of temperament. Substituting power of melodic expression for powers of speech, it applies equally to the musician as to the literary artist. "Let the powers of speech be fully developed, however; let the ability of the intellect to utter emotions be complete; and this fixity of style will disappear. The perfect writer will express himself according to his frame of mind. Now he will be rhythmical and now irregular; here his language will be plain and there ornate; sometimes his sentences will be balanced and at other times unsymmetrical; for awhile there will be considerable sameness, then again great variety. His mode of expression naturally responding to his state of feeling, there will flow from his pen a composition changing in the same degree that the aspects of his subject change. He will thus without effort conform to what we have seen to be the laws of effect. And while his work presents to the reader that variety needful to present continuous exertion of the same faculties, it will also answer to the description of all highly-organised products both of man and nature: it will be, not a series of like parts simply placed in juxtaposition, but one whole, made up of unlike parts that are mutually dependent." I must now reproduce a passage from a valuable work by the late Winwood Reade, who, being an explorer, personally observed the facts which he here embodies in very beautiful language:—"There is a science of music; but music is not a science. Nor is it an imitative art. It is a language. Words at first were rather sung than spoken, and sentences were rhythmical. The conversation of primeval man was conducted in verse and song; at a later period they invented prose; they used a method of speech which was less pleasing to the ear, but better suited for the communication of ideas." (Here we note that melodic expression has no affinity with the commonplace; words should never be sung that are better spoken; music should not accompany that to which it is no essential aid.) "Poetry and music ceased to be speech and became an art, as pantomime, which once was a part of speech, is now an art exhibited upon the stage. Poetry and music at first were one; the bard was a minstrel, the minstrel was a bard. The same man was composer, poet, vocalist, and instrumentalist, and instrument maker. He wrote the music, invented the air; as he sang he accompanied himself upon the harp, and he also made the harp. When writing came into vogue, the arts of the poet and the musician were divided, and music again was divided into the vocal and the instrumental, and finally instrument-making became a distinct occupation, to which fact may partly be ascribed the superiority of modern music to that of ancient times. The human language of speech bears the same relation to the human language of song as the varied bark of the civilised dog to its sonorous howl. There seems little in common between the lady who sings at the piano and the dog who chimes in with jaws opened and nose upraised; yet each is making use of the primitive language of its race; the wild dog can only howl, the wild woman can only sing. Gestures with us are used still as ornaments of speech, and some savage languages are yet in so imperfect a condition that gestures are requisite to elucidate the words. Gestures are the relics of the primitive language, and so are musical sounds. With the dog of the savage there is much howl in its bark, its voice is in a transitional state."

Thus we see that musical expression is the outcome of emotion; that melodic sound develops from the simple expression of a strong emotion to the complex differentiation of various degrees of feeling, according to the intensity of man's emotional nature; that sound-symbols cease to be melodious when used for intellectual analysis, or to convey details of business. By regarding the different Races of men in their various degrees of development, in comprehensive vision we can trace the evolution of musical thought from the childish simplicity of a Japanese melody to the astounding complexity of the Prelude to "Tristan." We must now speak of the dramatic element in music, and strive to show how the development of musical art must travel parallel with the development of the intellectual and emotional temperaments of mankind. Mr. Rowbotham, in his learned history of music, shows that the embryology of the musical art ends with the evolution of the three forms of instrument—percussion, wind, string. The means of the art being thus placed in the hands of the human race, it was for them to use them, either for the production of "sensuous din and noise," or to develop out of them the highest forms of tonal beauty.

The imagination of man is the most precious faculty by which he can realise and penetrate the facts of his existence. But, associated with his egotism, it is apt to run riot, to feed his vanity, to assist his savage instinct of tyranny; hence his stupid hugging of prejudices, his servility to super-

stitions. Still, these have proved the painful means of his slow progress from simplicity to complexity of organisation. We know that music is at once an expression and relief to the feelings; that it has a highly important connection with love; that it has afforded unbounded relief and consolation to many who yearn for a sympathy the egotism of their fellows often denies them. It is intimately connected with what I shall call the inner drama of human nature; not the drama which deals with the influence of circumstances upon character; but the drama that treats of the force of passions and emotions applied to human actions. Rhythmic sound tends to speech. It passes from the emotional to the practical stage. Speech becomes developed through the necessity of communicating useful desires or intellectual ideas. Musical sounds relate only to emotion. Speech is differentiated into a form of emotional expression and a form of practical expression. As the intellect grows language becomes subtle, graceful, capable of conveying *nuances* of expression. As emotional faculties develop music differentiates from simple notes of joy, pain, mirth to a highly complex, formulated expression of a diffused overflow of feeling; for it is a peculiarity of emotional feeling that *meets with no arresting intellectual doubt*, that it rises to a certain height, — then comes a pause and a resulting overflow. It seems as if human endurance of pleasure can only reach a certain elevation. Too great a depression produces despair, which numbs: too great an elevation results in a culminating emotional outburst, of which complex music is the most perfect channel of conveyance. To certain highly wrought states of human feeling music is the only satisfying relief. A great thinker has written as follows:—

"The peasants of all countries sing, in their talk, and savages resemble the people in the opera. Their conversation is of a 'libretto' character; it glitters with hyperbole and metaphor, and they frequently speak in recitative, chanting or intoning, and ending every sentence in a musically sounded O. Often, also, in the midst of conversation, if a man happens to become excited he will sing instead of speaking what he has to say: the other also replies in song, while the company around, as if touched by a musical wave, murmur a chorus in perfect unison, clapping their hands, undulating their bodies, and perhaps breaking forth into a dance. Just as the articulate or conventional speech has been developed into rich and varied tongues by means of which abstract ideas and delicate emotions can be expressed in appropriate terms, so the inarticulate or musical speech, the true primitive language of our race, has been developed with the aid of instruments into a rich and varied language of sound in which poems can be composed. When we listen to the sublime and mournful sonatas of Beethoven, when we listen to the tender melodies of Bellini, we fall into a trance; the brain burns and swells; its doors fly open; the mind sweeps forth into an unknown world, where all is dim, dusky, unutterably vast; gigantic ideas pass before us; we attempt to seize them to make them our own, but they vanish like shadows in our arms. And then, as the music becomes soft and low the mind returns and nestles to the heart; the senses are steeped in languor; the eyes fill with tears; the memories of the past take form and a voluptuous sadness permeates the soul, sweet as the sorrow of romantic youth when the real bitterness of life was yet unknown."

Here, then, is found the true source of the dramatic element in music. But in the Italian and French schools of opera there is too much ornament, useless and affected: too much artifice. In music, as in architecture, one must "decorate construction, not construct decoration." The true province of music on the stage is to intensify, idealise, and express purely emotional episodes, situations, and feelings, by blending, fusing, and contrasting harmoniously an *ensemble* of waves of emotion. Every earnest actor will tell us that a strain of music is of immense assistance in enabling him to rise to the adequate emotional pitch required to portray certain phases of feeling. The vast mind of Richard Wagner developed the rudiments of dramatic composition to a marvellous complexity, carefully selecting subjects which would form dramas of action and emotion only. Music has affinity only with dance, pantomime, and emotion that seeks vocal expression. Nearly all the recitative passages in Italian operas of the early Verdi school, notably "Traviata," are painfully artificial, and whatever is "affected" in all art is bound to be vulgar and sensational in the devilish sense. If the subject of a music-drama is not musical all through the unmusical portions should be expressed either in action or simple dialogue; the attempt to make music out of that which has no affinity to melody is a solecism in art as bad as the attempt to express in verse that which has no rhythmical or poetic signification. Wagner in his Nibelung trilogy has used his system of *leit motifs* to bridge over this difficulty. Music cannot express the prosaic.

Music can express mirth and joy. It can also express evil, if required for the purpose of contrast. But music that expresses mere animalism for the sole purpose of excitement is poisonous and infectious—notably music degraded to accompany a Bacchic orgy, a “can-can” as danced in France, and much of the lighter French *bouffe* music. On the other hand, “L’Elisir d’amore,” “Il Barbiere,” and “Die Meistersinger” are in their several degrees masterpieces of comic opera. But utterly false to the true dramatic element in music are all musical stage pieces which are constructed simply as pegs on which to hang musical “effects.” The wedding of melody and dramatic poetry must be one of affinity, not a mere marriage of convenience, which will produce in art a result as inharmonious as such unions usually do between men and women. Instances of the perfectly devilish in music used legitimately may be found in the last act of “Traviata,” the Carnival Chorus, and also a marvellous passage in Sir Arthur Sullivan’s oratorio, “The Prodigal Son,” describing the revels of the Prodigal, which left upon us an indelible impression of the empty vileness of sensual abandonment. But much of the light French opera music is of that enticing, siren character which is entirely devilish in its stimulation of that perverted sensuality and Atheistic luxury which cankered Parisian society of the Second Empire to the core, and which is described with Herculean power of direct and livid nakedness in Zola’s relentless book “The Rush for the Spoil.” Such use of music by any nation is retrogression.

History shows us with fearful distinctness, that all nations who have used wealth for the purposes of selfish luxury and feverish sensuality, while grinding the blood and bones of the producers of wealth, have been visited with certain, though not always sudden, destruction. Wealth in the future must be used only for refinement and culture of the whole people. Musicians especially, should preserve their art from degradation, because music is the only art which is not imitative: imitative music, so called, being mere trickery of perverted skill. Music is a growth; it is a birth from a union of feeling and thought. It is impulse made manifest. It is the voice of the great human heart; and the time shall come when its sweet message of love and peace shall steal into the ears of all the peoples of the earth, calming their passions, blending them into loyal love and simple truth, and raising up that “Soul of goodness in things Evil” which shall descend again as an invisible mantle of Divine serenity upon all created entities.

“DIE MEISTERSINGER” AT COVENT GARDEN.

In obedience to the very sound principle of trying “to see ourselves as others see us,” we print some extracts from a criticism of the “Meistersinger” as performed at Covent Garden, which has appeared in the “Kölnische Zeitung.” The writer says:—“Some of the fashionable public came from habit, and some Wagner enthusiasts from curiosity; but in both cases expecting little—the former, from an ineradicable distrust of Wagner’s later works; the latter, from an idea that the most German of Wagner’s works could not be made presentable in an Italian dress, and there was the additional fact that in all the cast there was only one German name, that of Fräulein Bauermeister, who played Magdalene. . . . Also, almost all the performers played their parts for the first time, which may be said, too, of the orchestra led by Signor Mancinelli. Nevertheless, every act ended with enthusiastic applause, and it was the universal opinion that henceforth ‘Die Meistersinger’ can never disappear from the Italian repertoire.

“Expense and trouble had not been spared. Mr. A. Harris, the manager, had made a pilgrimage to Bayreuth in company with his conductor, Signor Mancinelli, in order to drink at the Richter fount, and they had been followed by Messrs. Lassalle and Jean de Reszke. All returned thoroughly delighted, especially the two last-named vocalists, who are most enthusiastic about their parts, and who sang last night with surprising intelligence, and, more, with genuine truth and fire. . . . Of the performers each one was well chosen for his part. The weakest perhaps was the Eva of Madame Albani, who seemed to be neither in voice nor in the humour for the ‘Meistersinger;’ but the David of M. Montariol and the Beckmesser of M. Isnardon gave great satisfaction; and the audience laughed heartily, which is one of the rarest occurrences in the Italian opera.

“That a Pole, Jean de Reszke, should comprehend and sing the part of Walther is not on the whole so wonderful as that a Frenchman,

M. Lassalle, from the Paris Grand Opera, should penetrate so deeply into the part of Hans Sachs. . . . Both artists came as near as possible to a German grasp of the parts. The most decidedly faulty portion of the performance was in the orchestra, which, however (it is fair to remember) was wearied by five performances weekly, had only had very few full rehearsals, and was forced to play from parts which had only the German words underneath, which very few of the players understood—so that the necessary connection between players and singers was lacking. On the whole, however, through this performance, Wagnerism in England has made a great stride forward.” Mr. Augustus Harris has reason, we think, to be well satisfied with his German critic.

THE MUSIC OF NATIONS.

BY M. DETT.

(Concluded from page 547.)

In German music the tendency to develop individuality expressed itself by the search after harmony rather than melody; each note sought its fullest expression, its deepest significance. But this is not the only, nor the most important, difference between the two schools of music. There is the difference in Form and the difference in Ideas to be expressed. The German philosophic spirit, in order to express itself truthfully, was impelled to seek larger forms of music instead of remaining content within the conventional limits—the essence or spirit of an idea being of more value than the form. Innovations and eccentricities in musical form are nearly always German in origin. “What is German?” Wagner asks in one of his essays on German art and politics, and defines German to be the capacity to love and cultivate a thing *for its own sake*, regardless of pleasure or profit accruing to ourselves in the matter. When men like Beethoven and Schumann had original ideas to express, they enlarged the existing forms or invented new ones.

As regards the ideas expressed by the two races (leaving out of the question the religious music produced by both), we find the Italian dwelling most on those passions and emotions which are most striking—which lend themselves most easily to dramatic representation—the broad primary emotions, if one may so define them (such as love, joy, sorrow, &c.), *qui sautent aux yeux*; whilst the German, though not deficient in dramatic power, as a man of sentiment, yet loves to reproduce all the infinite shades of emotion experienced by a self-analysing nature. Italians have not those rich treasures of lyric compositions, still less of what we may call the music of domestic emotions represented in German music by Mendelssohn’s “Songs without words,” Schubert’s “Müller Cycloids,” and the like. Such compositions are essentially products of the Northern mind with its greater feeling for domesticity and its habits of self-analysis. In passion the Southerners carry all before them, but in sentiment the man of the north has the field. An Italian in love will write a passionate appeal to his mistress; he will not stop like the German to ask metaphysical questions of the brook which flows past her dwelling, nor can he dreamily speculate on the “Yes” or “No” which will answer his wooing. He will clasp her in his arms at once or—die! Only a German could illustrate in music such thoughts as those in Schubert’s “Doppelgänger.”

Not only in the lyric expression of reflection and sentiment is the German far ahead of the Italian, but in the expression of deeper and more abstract ideas. “Philosophy in music” is more at home in Germany than in Italy. The Italian spirit in music has not yet shown itself capable of sustaining great abstract thoughts, such as we find in Schumann’s or in Brahms’ sonatas, quartets, &c.; nor has it succeeded in presenting the abstract qualities of a character or event in music, such creations, for instance, as Beethoven’s “Eroica,” the overtures to “Leonora,” “Coriolanus,” “Ruy Blas,” &c.; still less those higher conceptions presented in the seventh and ninth symphonies of Beethoven. The Italian bent is more towards the dramatic, as we said before, which is just what one would expect from the general character of the south. The sonata or the symphony is more in accordance with the reflective turn of mind of the German, which muses on impressions or ideas, views them in all lights, questions and works them out like problems. The German never rests until he has got the *essence* of a thing or of an impression, whilst the Italian is satisfied with the outward appearance. This may be also the reason why Italians have not yet gathered the poetical essence, as it were, of their landscapes, the “*Stimmung*” called forth by scenes of Nature in order to

express it worthily in music. They have no rival "Tone-pictures" to compete with Mendelssohn's "Hebrides," with Beethoven's "Pastoral," with Wagner's "Waldweben," or Forest-Scene. Their poets and painters show feeling for Nature, why not their musicians?

A special colouring is given to German music by the inherent love of the mysterious or supernatural. This trait dates from the earliest times. Tacitus mentions the Germans as rich in myths and legendary songs, fostered in the dim shade of their sombre forests, which they peopled with imaginary beings of all kinds. The very spirit of these mysterious forests lives in the magical incantations of the "Freischütz," in the tripping elves of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," in Schumann's mystic "Waldscenen."

Germans have been the first to realise fully all that music *can* express, Italians are beginning to follow in their train, and will doubtless accomplish great things, absorbing Northern thought into Southern art and warmth.

A word, in passing, on French music, which has always been more influenced by Italy than by Germany. Without having sufficient vitality to form a school of her own, France has nevertheless influenced in some degree the music of the other two schools. We say "France," but "Paris" would be the more correct expression. The mission of Paris has been (as an Italian writer puts it) eclectic. Paris has been a rallying-point for—on the whole impartial—criticism, and more than one battle has been fought there between German and Italian principles. Gluck, Cherubini, Meyerbeer, Verdi, each in turn entered the lists at Paris, and principles were contested fiercely, all Europe looking on.

Of the third great School of Music, the Slavonic, it is difficult to speak with authority, as it is yet too young to have made its final mission fully apparent. It has no long traditions of art in its past, no centuries of classicism; it starts boldly into life at the highest point reached by the other schools, taking for its departing point Wagner, the 9th Symphony and Liszt. The Slavonic element is now an influence most largely felt in Eastern Europe, in order of proximity less towards the West,—perhaps least of all by us, remote alike in position and alien in spirit;—and is every day becoming a force of greater importance. The race, as yet, is essentially young, crude and semi-barbarous not yet entirely certain of itself and its aims, but full of vigour, and striving towards a goal, the goal of all created things: completion and development of self, and, consequent expression of self. The race, like the regions it occupies, is characterised by startling contrasts. The burning summers, the icy plains of winter, the sad steppes, the wild ecstasy of motion riding or sleighing across the plains—all find their counterpart in the Oriental love of gorgeous colour, the melancholy languor, the undisciplined passion of the Slavonic peoples. In Russian folk-songs the noticeable features are the absence of rhythmical symmetry, the most arbitrary divisions of time, arbitrary changes from major to minor, and frequent use of the ancient scales. The music is by turns melancholy, gay, fiery, passionate, languorous, but full of a grace and vivacity peculiarly its own. The virtues and the defects of an essentially young and undisciplined nation are mirrored in these national airs; they are spontaneous, irregular, original, full of sentiment,—but they show an absolute unwillingness to conform to rules, and a contempt for form. This last want of appreciation for symmetry of form is one of the gravest defects of Slavonic music. We cannot judge yet whether it proceeds from poverty of real artistic feeling for form—or whether Slavonic music needs to express itself some larger forms than those at present recognised.

The most absolute mastery of technical difficulties is remarkable in the young Russian school of performers and composers. They seem to delight in overcoming obstacles, and revel in "impossible" harmonic combination, and in formidable passages requiring the utmost skill and manual dexterity.

Perhaps the great characteristic of Slavonic music is its unrest, expressed by its ceaseless modulations, its chromatic combinations, its wanderings to discords ever remoter from the tonic. It is true that the modern spirit of unrest, the spirit of the age, is also reflected in the writings of modern composers of other nations. But the Slavonic unrest is something more, and has doubtless a different origin,—it is the unrest of unsatisfied youth, rather than of overstrained nerves, for the Slavs have not developed during these centuries in which other nations of Europe have risen and declined. They have been almost dormant, kept down like children (or rather serfs) under an iron despotism, ignorant of themselves and the world, guarding the characteristics of their Oriental origin. Slavonic music has its roots in the East, among many

different tribes of wanderers, and with many different characteristics as yet unreconciled and often jarring among themselves. How, then, can one expect restful music, or music which shall represent a nation guided and controlled by one common impulse, a nation consolidated and at one with itself? We may expect many of the characteristics of far-off Asia in Slavonic music, and all the unrest of a young race longing to free itself and express itself, but full of contradictory impulses and ignorance, leaping from darkness to light, and almost blinded by the change. The Slavonic love of brilliance and decoration or ornament is very strong, the emotional faculty unusually great, whilst the aptitude for science, for reasoning is as yet in the background—in short, the Slavonic imagination is inclined to run riot without a ruling principle to restrain it. This luxuriance and these faults are, however, the luxuriance and the faults of a strong young nation—imagination and emotion come before reason (in order of time) in the life of both nations and individuals, and it is precisely this wealth of emotion, this originality, this artistic susceptibility which point to a corresponding greatness in the creative faculty, when the Slavonic race shall be educated and perfected. So far the new School has only displayed emotion—as opposed to the Italian art and the German science, but the very strength of feeling in this young race would seem to promise a proportionate strength of other qualities not yet mature and which only the future can develop.

FOREIGN NOTES.

Herr Carl Goldmark has occupied himself during his holiday at Gmünden in writing a new symphonic overture, to be entitled "Der gefesselte Prometheus" (Prometheus Bound), which will be produced during the winter by the Philharmonic Society of Vienna.

Herr Edvard Grieg has written a concert-piece for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra, founded on a drama, "Olaf Trygvanson," by his countryman, Björnson, which will probably be performed in the course of the winter.

As was stated in these columns last week, Herr Felix Mottl, perhaps the most enterprising conductor of Germany, hopes to produce "Les Troyens" as the author intended it to be played. This work is strictly in two parts; (1) "La Prise de Troie," an opera, we believe, never yet represented; and (2) "Les Troyens à Carthage," which was brought out at the Théâtre-Lyrique November 4th, 1863, and enjoyed a short life of about twenty performances. It is not yet quite clear whether Herr Mottl proposes to perform the first part—probably not, as two evenings would then be necessary for the entire work; but even the second part has never been played in its entirety on the French stage after the first night, and the reason deserves to be stated, for it is of a very original sort. The second act consisted simply of an instrumental symphony, descriptive of the storm which, according to Virgil, compelled Dido and Æneas to take refuge in a cavern. This symphony is supplemented by much pantomimic action which, even outside of Paris, will probably be found to be a stumbling-block, though, after all, it does not lack a certain poetic justification. But a whole act of an opera, consisting purely of pantomime without one note sung, is an eccentricity compared with which the wildest conceptions of Wagner are mere commonplace.

A reception was given by Madame Wagner the other day at which M. Blauwaert, the famous Belgian baritone, sang a number of Flemish songs by Benoit, Demol, and Gustave Huberti, the last-named composer accompanying his own works, which are spoken of in terms of high praise.

The wife of M. Vandyck, whose interpretation at Bayreuth of the rôle of "Parsifal" has won him such encomiums, has, within the last few days, presented her husband with a daughter. Curiously enough, the proud parents have named the child "Isult," which, at any rate, shows the singer's loyalty to Wagnerian traditions.

TO THE DEAF.—A Person cured of Deafness and noises in the head of 23 years' standing by a simple remedy, will send a description of it FREE to any Person who applies to NICHOLSON, 31, Bedford-square, London, W.C.—ADVT.

The Poet's World.

MAN'S JUDGMENT.

Even at best we see but dimly now:
 For cheating mists—like those at winter noon
 That rob the Day-King of his brilliancy—
 Rise—and such colour-blindness to our minds
 Impart—the very rainbow drops her hues
 And seemeth featureless. Each loftier work,
 Each deed and motive of our fellow-men,
 We test by standards that belie the truth,
 Reck'ning too little or too much their worth,—
 The good, perchance, made small—the evil great,—
 But, either way, reduced or magnified
 As Interest or Jealousy direct. Our ears
 Infected often by some poisoner's breath,
 Whose constant smile makes us believe in him;
 Our verdict shifting at the beck of Fashion,—
 The self-same actions of the self-same heart
 Condemn'd to-day, to-morrow crown'd with praise!
 Servant of Him who made thee,—
 Would'st thou more clearly read thy brother's soul?
 Mount to those heights where passion's clouds are not:
 There purer atmosphere shall aid thine own
 To read it with an intellect of Love.

Aug. xix., 1889.

F. K. HARFORD.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A PEN AND A CHEROOT.

Scene. Author's study. Valpy's edition of Homer is lying open on the table.

(Note.—The well-known Valpy colophon is a hand feeding a lamp with oil; and the motto "Ex fumo dare lucem.")

Pen speaks. "Out of darkness fire to strike"
 Is my emblem and my motto.

Cheroot answers. By day and night I charm alike
 With perfume more than Persia's otto.

Pen, moralising. To end in what? Dust and white ashes—
 My lamp burns brighter as it flashes.

Cheroot, ditto. But with no hand the flame to cherish
 Lives too its hour, and then must perish.

THOMAS MEDWYN.

The above lines, now published for the first time, were received from Captain Medwyn in January, 1855, in answer to a metrical letter written by a young friend at Oxford. Medwyn was cousin of Shelley and his school-fellow at Eton, and is chiefly known as the author of "Conversations with Lord Byron." He belonged to a gifted set of "*esprits forts*"—Byron, Bulwer, Leigh Hunt, &c., and was one of those who helped to burn Shelley on the shore of the Mediterranean in July, 1822. He possessed much talent for writing "*vers de société*," and had a strong vein of sarcasm. He was for some time in the Life Guards, and somewhat expensive in his tastes, his collection of paintings when sold filling Christie's large room. Amongst his numerous stories of past days he told how Lord Byron once said to him, "Medwyn, if you would drink as much gin and water as I do, you would be just as good a poet." He lived for many years at Heidelberg, where he entertained Justinus Körner, Berlioz, Freiligrath, the two Danas, Chelius, and other distinguished literary men, but finally returned to England, where he died in 1865.

XENIEN.

"Xenien," it is scarcely necessary to remind our readers, was the title under which Goethe and Schiller published in 1797, in the "*Musenalmanach*," about 400 epigrams, which created considerable sensation in Germany on account of their sharp criticisms of authors, books, and literary matters generally. "Xenia" were those gifts, honours, &c., which in ancient Greece the host offered to the guest. The German title was, however, derived from Martial, whose 13th book of Epigrams, dealing with this peculiar social feature, is entitled "Xenia." In England few writers have attempted anything of this kind—Coleridge and Walter Savage Landor being among the few that can be mentioned. It is our intention to endeavour to revive this epigrammatic side of poetic power, and to that end we invite contributions. These may be grave or gay, and of lengths varying from two to eight lines.

No. 1.

THE MERCHANDISE OF KNOWLEDGE.

Prov. iii., 14.

"Better than the merchandise of silver and the gain thereof than fine gold."

Change thou thy gold in the mart: they'll weigh thee its measure
 of silver:

Value for value thou hast: gone from thy store is the gold.
 Change thou thy wit with the wise; so makest thou true
 acquisition

Gaining, yet keeping unchanged—all that was formerly thine.

Q.

No. 2.

LUTETIA PARISIORUM A.D. 1889.

PARIS of yore, they say, rejected both Pallas and Juno;
 Venus with love-lit eyes—smiled, and the apple was hers.
 Time has not alter'd his choice—as Americans now not a few know:
 PARIS—by night and day—Pleasure to Wisdom prefers.

E.

No. 3.

THE MUSICAL WORLD WITHIN.

Curas cithara tollit.

All history sheweth that troubles are kill'd
 By the charm of mellifluent sound:
 So friends, let our hearts with good music be fill'd,
 And the world will go pleasantly round.

E.

No. 4.

PATIENTIA, TU DOCES.*

I.

The Doctor's motto, "Patients is a virtue,"
 Is far the best of mental recipes:
 T'will while away the daily cares that hurt you,
 And guard from many a deep-mouth'd precipice.

II.

Wouldst thou, brave heart, attain to highest ends,
 Be constant in the practice of thy patience.
 Stand firm—if e'er unjustly stabb'd by friends,
 Nor wince, though skinn'd alive by kind relations.

E.

* N.B.—Should not this be spelt "two doses" ?—Printer's Devil.

The Organ World.

THE CHURCH CHOIR OF THE FUTURE.

BY F. GILBERT WEBB.

The old question: whether boys' or women's voices are most fitted to sustain the soprano and contralto parts in the services of the church, seems to be again much exercising the attention of the clergy and laity; especially of those who have little knowledge of the subject.

The introduction of boy choristers in acts of worship dates from an early period in the history of the Roman Church, and apparently was one of the consequences of the promulgation of the doctrine of the celibacy of priests. But before this time, and as the Church became more established and its services consequently more elaborate, it was found inconvenient to have women participating in the ecclesiastical portions of the service; their presence, moreover, was found in many instances to have the reverse of a spiritualizing effect on the brethren, scandals arose, and those in authority, as the simplest way out of the difficulty, banished women from all intimate connection with the service. It was speedily discovered, however, in the Roman Church, that boys' voices were not so satisfactory as those of women, and various experiments were tried to regain the lost richness of tone; among others male *soprani* were introduced. But ultimately women's voices were employed in the more elaborate music of the high mass; being, however, hidden from view of the congregation. Cardinal Manning lately banished from his church all help from the female voice, but, as before, it has resulted in the impossibility of adequately performing many of the finest musical works written for the Roman Church.

The Church of England, however, has no services but those the upper parts of which properly trained boy choristers can effectively sing; in fact, the soprano and alto parts are written with especial regard to the compass and peculiarities of the boy's voice.

Undoubtedly women whose voices had received good training would sing the boys' part with greater richness of tone and deeper expression, but well-trained voices are more the exception than the rule amongst voluntary members of church choirs, added to which experience proves, however humiliating it may be to confess it, that the generality of those who give their services are not actuated by the higher motive of rendering service to God, and consequently are not sufficiently regular in their attendance at choir practices to ensure great musical efficiency in *ensemble* singing.

Women undoubtedly took part in certain portions of the services of the Temple, but examination of various authorities and passages referring to the subject all indicate that women's voices were employed in passages of a popular description, which in most cases were intended to be also sung by the congregation, the more ecclesiastical portion of the service being sustained by the priests. Study of the formation of those psalms which were intended to be used by the people reveals the fact that the priests devoted the greatest attention to what we should now term congregational singing, and the entrance of the women's voices would thus serve as a kind of signal for the people to audibly join in the songs of praise.

The whole question is practically one of convenience, subject to the great point of that which is most conducive to the reverent and impressive rendering of the church service. Following in part the usages of the Temple, an auxiliary choir of women's voices to lead the hymns and such portions of the service as are deemed right and appropriate for the congregation to take part in, would undoubtedly do much to promote musical accord and prevent ambitious voices in the congregation disturbing alike the balance of the male church choir and the reverent enjoyment of those who listen; the institution of such auxiliary choirs would also greatly tend to improve congregational singing. Such a choir might consist of a large number of voices, for provided it were located in one spot it would by no means be necessary that the members of the choir should be placed in the chancel. The large west-end galleries existent in many churches would afford a good position and give opportunities for fine musical effects.

This is an age of unrest and seeking after "new things," with a consequent tendency to ignore the fact that the customs of the present are the result of that which long experience has proved to be on the whole most convenient. It is not long since the general unsatisfactory consequences, both musically and socially, of mixed choirs led to the adoption

of boy choristers, and therefore the disbanding of our present choirs would be a step backwards. Moreover, the beneficial effect exercised on the boys by the training they receive in a church choir, and the number of eminent musicians who received the foundation of their musical knowledge and tastes as choir boys is worthy of remembrance. There is no scriptural authority for their presence in the church beyond the fact that they are the outcome of St. Paul's injunction to "Let everything be done decently and in order," and if boys do not conduce to this it is the distinct fault of the choir master.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE NICENE CREED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

SIR: I trust that you will pause a moment before accepting so completely and enforcing so markedly the suggestions and criticisms of Mr. Harford as to the musical treatment of the Nicene Creed. Such niceties of exegesis can and will be overdone if they are allowed to grow into a fad; and the stereotyped list you give in this week's issue is likely to make them so develop.

Mr. Harford, in his wholesale and most mischievous attack on the old polyphonic masters, has quite forgotten that the bar line was not the same to them as to us. With us Moderns it marks the accents, with the Ancients it was merely a convenient landmark to facilitate the reading of the notes. Many apparently false accents in old music disappear if the music is sung without laying a modern interpretation on the bar line. He has laid to the door of the composers what a little study would show him was the fault of the interpreters. His instance of the apparent false accent of "upon" in the Kyrie is a case in point; a little care in the phrasing and a word of explanation to the singers removes the false impression, and the same remark will apply to the vast majority of examples in older masters. Moreover, Mr. Harford forgets that the ancients aimed at producing a general devotional monochrome, not at painting the meaning of each word and phrase in contrasted colour. He may have his preference for one or other, but he must allow both styles to exist side by side for the general benefit of mankind. He would throw Botticelli into the fire to make room for Verestschagin.

In your list of Memoranda I should like to suggest that you should reconsider many points before you tie down young composers to adopt them. I will take them in the order of your numbering.

1 and 2 are inconsistent: the fact of the priest singing the leading phrase must cause the break between "God" and "the Father"; at least if Mr. Harford adopts the authorised intonation for the priest.

3. No English person of education would pronounce "invisible" "invisiblé": we cannot Latinise the language to that extent.

4. Can be overdone as well as underdone.

6. Also: for if "of" is too much marked it becomes pedantic. The place to explain the meaning of the Latin "de" is the catechist's class, not the composer's music-paper. Beethoven in the Mass in D writes *Deum de Deo*; yet no setting of the Creed is more accurate in point of declamation, even to the verge of word-painting.

8 is absurd. "Came down"—*descendit*. The accent on "down" is not out of place; it is the important word in the sentence.

9 is optional. The best old English poets accent both ways. At worst *äls* is a poetic license.

10 is overdone. It will generally depend upon the phrasing of the singers more than the setting.

13. The two words have an equal accent, for they are practically one word of two syllables.

14 is a matter for breathing and phrasing in the singers.

16 can easily be overdone, and underdone.

17 also.

23 and 24 are practically an impossibility. There must be an accent, unless the whole section is gabbled like the recitation of a chant. The close of Wesley's Creed in E is an instance of the poor effect caused by a mixture of chant and measured styles. Compare, however, the treatment of "et expecto" in Bach's B minor Mass, than which nothing could be more accentuated and appropriate.

The best advice to the young composer would be to study the Nicene Creed in its Latin form and its settings by Palestrina, Bach, and Beethoven with special reference to their various treatment of the words.

These examples will show how the accents and sentiments can be legitimately varied without a loss of sense on the one hand or the adoption of a stereotyped reading on the other. No one is more convinced than I am of the importance of correct accentuation, but I am equally certain that as great mischief can be done by pedantic dogmatism as by careless reading of the sense.

Before Mr. Harford continues his crusade against our elders and betters of Tudor and Stuart times, he would do well to compare Walmisley's short preface to his eight part service in B flat with S. S. Wesley's long disquisition before his service in E, and to remember that Wesley lived to regret most deeply that he had ever written his hasty and mischievous remarks. Both were men who knew their language and understood the diction of the prayer book.

If the musico-clerical officials whom Wesley somewhat ironically dignified with the title of "Chief Musicians" would devote themselves to reforming the elocutionary shortcomings now, alas! so universal amongst their own brethren, they would be doing a real service to the community. The generally scented style in which the honest, straightforward English of the Bible is misrepresented by a vast number of the clergy would be a fairer field for Mr. Harford's diatribes than the works of the great masters of English Church music.

Yours faithfully,

C. VILLIERS STANFORD.

* * To avoid a delay which might cause hesitation on the part of intending competitors, we have departed from ordinary usage, and shown a proof of Professor Stanford's letter to Canon Harford. By this means the letter and preliminary reply will be seen together.—Ed. M. W.

POUR LE MOMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

SIR: Although to answer Professor Stanford's letter—which you show me already printed for THE MUSICAL WORLD—requires somewhat more time than I am able at this eleventh hour to give, yet for the sake of your readers and myself I will, for the moment, make a short rejoinder to the objections which I see have been made.

I ought perhaps to say at the outset that I do not think there is one single point in that letter of sufficient importance to call for a serious reply, or which might not well be left unanswered, to answer itself; but, inasmuch as this criticism comes from the Professor of Music in the University of Cambridge, I feel it incumbent on me to write a few sentences, which may serve as *avant-coureurs* to a fuller letter which I hope to lay before you next week.

With respect to the Nos. marked 1 and 2 in my list of "Memoranda," the Professor observes:—"The fact of the priest singing the leading phrase must cause a break between 'God' and 'THE FATHER;' at least if Mr. Harford adopts the authorised intonation for the priest." The better to show one of several ways by which this wondrous difficulty can be solved I will take the Professor's own setting of the Creed. At the end of the Priest's lead the word 'God' is noted as a semibreve with a pause over it,—which nearly doubles its length. The next bar (4 crotchets in a bar) commences with work for the organ, the choir coming in on the last crotchet. Now, instead of having a pause on the semibreve, carry it as a dotted minim through three-fourths of the next bar, and there will be no longer any lamentable hiatus or break between the voices of priest and people.

Next, with respect to No. 3, I believe that few persons even of moderate education would, if called upon to speak the phrase "all things visible and invisible," refrain from throwing an accent upon the first syllable of the last word, even at the risk of what the Professor calls "Latinising" the English language. By what means this supposed Latinisation takes place—through accentuating the first syllable instead of the antepenultimate in "invisible"—I am quite at a loss to understand; but, in order to meet Dr. Stanford's objection to the Roman tongue let us substitute "not" for the objectionable "in." How would the Professor accentuate, either for rhetorical or musical purposes, "visible and not visible?"

It seems ridiculous to call public attention, and that for the second time, to what will be to the majority of readers self-evident: but, as it is necessary to settle the question now raised, I have written to three scholars

of high culture, two being Barristers and Masters of Arts of Cambridge, the third a Master of Arts of Oxford and chief writer in the "Quarterly Review," asking them for their verdict respecting the proper accent in "invisible," "came down," and "rose again," in this Creed,—these being the principal points to which Professor Stanford refers. Their answers will be given, I hope, in next week's issue. For the moment I would refer those interested in this matter to the article on the "Musical Treatment of the Nicene Creed," which appeared in this paper three weeks ago.

On No. 6. With respect to Beethoven's rendering of "DEUM DEO," I, for one, have nothing to say against it; but let not Professor Stanford on that account shelter his own heinous error under the ægis of Beethoven's correctness. The Professor in this Creed is setting English, not Latin, and his rendering of God of God suggests the idea of DEUM DEI, which DEUM cannot possibly convey.

With respect to No. 8, I would point out that adverbs are attached to verbs in order to qualify or intensify their meaning, e.g., "come down" and "rise up." This qualifying power does not destroy the primary importance of the verb any more than that of the mistletoe destroys the strength of the oak to which it is attached. It is of course a truism to observe that accent may be "overdone as well as underdone," but I hope to write more fully about "come down" next week.

With respect to No. 9 and the propriety of emphasizing the final syllable in 'also,' I would ask the Professor to name the English poets who have accentuated it thus during the last 400 years. Chaucer, we know, has in one instance used the word in a somewhat doubtful way; but whatever choice in this matter there may have been in the reign of K. Edw. III., there is none in the present day,—as Johnson, Webster, and others who have written dictionaries, are unanimous in giving no alternative.

As the other objections of Professor Stanford apply to the words of "Memoranda," which are only 'memoranda' for special use, and which must be taken only with reference to what has been more fully expressed in my preceding Article and Letter on the Creed, I think that no more comment upon his animadversions is needed from me at this moment; but with respect to what the Professor is good enough to call my "wholesale and mischievous attack upon the old polyphonic masters," I will briefly say that for all great musicians—of all times and of all schools—I have through life had the deepest reverence: that the chief object of my letter entitled "Plain-Song and 'Plain-Song'" was to contrast the beautiful results formerly obtained by great masters (of whom I mentioned Orlandus Lassus and Palestrina) with the miserable attempts at setting the words of the Church Canticles to Plain-Song made from time to time by several eminent musicians in this country between the sixteenth century and the present day: that I distinctly stated that the earliest maltreaters of the words were by no means the worst; and, furthermore,—it was with the express view of warning future composers of Church Music against the flagrant mistakes that have been made during the last ten years that I wrote the subsequent Article on the musical treatment of the Nicene Creed.

Professor Stanford may call this action on my part, if he pleases, 'pedantic dogmatism'—but I shall not on that account cease to point steadily to the fact that in Cathedral Services as in secular Cantatas nothing can justify musical phrases which do not reflect and illustrate the words to which they are set.

I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

FREDERICK K. HARFORD.

THE CATHEDRAL PSALTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

SIR: I am not at all surprised to find that your correspondent, Mr. Owen, is dissatisfied with the above Psalter. The wonder is, considering its many defects, it should still be used in so many places. The absurd pointing of the Gloria Patri was alone sufficient to condemn the book.

Glory be to the Father | AND to the | Son

and | to the | Holy Ghost.

As regards the omission of commas, there is some excuse. The Prayer Book version of the Psalms is over punctuated, and contains more stops than are really wanted either for good reading, or for chanting. Still, Mr. Owen's suggestion to insert a note of exclamation after such little words as Yes, Nay, Lo, &c., is a good one; and he will find it already anticipated

in that very excellent Psalter, "The Parochial," published a few years since by Messrs. Weekes of 14, Hanover-street.

To prevent "gabbling" on the part of choir-boys, I have found it a good plan to give them occasionally a reading lesson in the Psalms; with a brief explanation of the more difficult words and obsolete phrases. This you will find interests them, and leads to clearer and more intelligent chanting. Such at least was the experience of

Yours faithfully,

August 20th.

AN OLD CHOIRMASTER.

NOTES.

With the object of promoting the fund for the restoration of St. Saviour's, Southwark, the Bishop of Rochester has directed the church to be open to visitors between the hours of eleven a.m. and four p.m. Those who are interested in church architecture and ancient monuments will do well to take advantage of the opportunity now offered. The present building stands on the site of the old religious house of St. Mary Overies, by which title the present church was known up to the sixteenth century. Few who have passed over London Bridge can have failed to notice on the western side of the High-street this partly buried and imposing edifice, which when restored will become a sub-metropolitan cathedral.

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone has sent a donation of £20 towards the completion of Truro Cathedral.

During the month's holiday of the boy choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral especially harmonised services for men's voices have been sung with remarkably good effect. Helmore's Psalter has been used for the Psalms, much to Cannon Liddon's satisfaction, who strongly favours Plain-Song.

Those who are in favour of lady choristers might receive a few hints from a visit on Sunday morning to the French Anglican Church in Bloomsbury-street, where a choir of about fifteen girls in violet frocks, white pinafores, and Normandy caps ably sustain the musical portion of the service. The church was opened in the sixteenth century for the benefit of the Huguenot refugees, a few descendants of whom are still numbered amongst the congregation.

Mr. Moreton Hand, the hon. sec. of the Guild of Organists, has been appointed organist and choirmaster of St. Jude's, Chelsea.

PROMENADE CONCERTS.

COVENT GARDEN.

The aspect of Covent Garden on Wednesday must have sorely troubled those who believe that high-class music is "caviare to the general." The house was crammed, and, what is more remarkable, the crowd in the promenade stood still all through the performance of the symphony. True, that symphony was Beethoven's "Pastoral," which is regarded as, to a certain extent, a popular work; but the respect paid to it on this occasion need not be underrated on that account. The beautiful work was creditably rendered, the two middle movements especially. Herr Arthur Freidheim played, with his accustomed brilliancy, and more than usual expression, Weber's Concertstück, and Mr. Vandenberg displayed excellent tone and technique in Schumann's Romanza in A minor for oboe. The vocalists were Mdle. Colombati and Mr. Barrington Foote, the former of whom gave Mozart's "Gli angui d'inferno" with such acceptance as to gain an encore. The orchestral selections included the "Oberon" overture and Mackenzie's "Benedictus," and a selection from Beethoven's Septet was well given by Messrs. Frye Parker, W. H. Hann, E. Howell, E. Ould, J. Egerton, T. E. Mann, and J. Hutchins. Signor Arditì conducted with intelligence and care.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

The directorate of the Promenade Concerts which were inaugurated last Saturday at Her Majesty's Theatre have, it must be confessed, scored one point over the managers of the rival enterprise at Covent Garden in the charming scheme of decoration which has transformed the theatre into so quaint and pretty a piece of Elizabethan architecture.

The Greatest of all Pianofortes. THE STEINWAY PIANOFORTES. New York & London.
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What may be the precise æsthetic effect on the average auditor of these undeniably artistising surroundings we do not know, but at any rate the more cultivated portion of the audience cannot fail to appreciate the attempt to give music—even of a Promenade Concert—a fitting *entourage*. With the programme presented on the opening night we shall not speak at great length, for ample opportunities will offer themselves later of giving fuller account of the work done by Signor Bevnigani and his colleagues. It is sufficient to record that on the occasion in question the vocalists were Miss Alice Gomes, Miss Hilda Wilson, Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Leo Stormont, who all achieved success in their various songs; while the band, led by Mr. Frye Parker, gave excellent interpretations of an admirably-selected programme, which included three movements from the "Pastoral Symphony," Tchaikowsky's "Italian Caprice," and the overture to Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor." When it is added that M. de Pachmann played pieces by Chopin in his most delightful style it will be felt that the new enterprise started under most auspicious circumstances.

FRAU MATERNA.

Amalie Materna, who is, perhaps, the most distinguished artist on the German operatic stage, was born at St. Georgen, Styria, in which place her father was a schoolmaster. She made her *début* in 1864 at the Thalia-Theater of Gratz, and shortly afterwards married Herr Karl Friedrich, a well-known actor, with whom she subsequently appeared at the Karls Theater, Vienna, in operetta. It was not long, however, before it became evident that she was fitted for work of a much higher class, and in 1869 she appeared at the Imperial Opera House as Selika in "L'Africaine," interpreting the part in a way which immediately lifted her to the very highest rank. In 1876 she sang at the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth in the part of Brunnhilde, for which her magnificent presence and exceptional vocal abilities proclaimed her a probably unique exponent. A year later she sang in the Wagner concerts which were given at the Albert Hall, and has since more than maintained her position among the ablest interpreters of Wagnerian rôles and the chief ornaments of German art.

PROVINCIAL.

BRISTOL.—Although music is almost a dead letter in Bristol just now, as it is everywhere else, there are already signs of an awakening. In a few of the city churches particularly some gratifying features are noticeable. Christ Church has just undergone some internal structural alterations, and a beautiful front has been put to the organ gallery, while the organ itself is shortly to be remodelled. It was at this church that a few weeks since the first Sunday evening service without a sermon was held, and others will take place when musical preparations are sufficiently advanced. "Bethany," the new work of Mr. C. Lee Williams, to be produced at the Gloucester Musical Festival at the beginning of next month, will be taken in hand as soon as it is published, and will be rendered at Christ Church at an early date. At All Saints', City, where there is a fine organ (badly situated however), an admirable organist, and a good quartet choir, some changes are being talked about. The idea is to put the organ over the west entrance where it formerly stood, and to introduce a choir of surpliced boys. The discussion regarding ladies in surplices, which originated in a London monthly musical periodical, and has extended to the columns of a London daily, has also been discussed in the Bristol papers. On three occasions or more it has been referred to by the Bristol "Times and Mirror," and according to that journal the matter is under the consideration of the authorities of one or more churches in the city, and it is not improbable that ladies in surplices may appear as auxiliaries to the existing choirs. In a few instances it is only a matter of robing, as in some churches there are ladies who render great help in the singing, although they do not sit with the choir.

Operatic music has been heard little or nothing of for some time, but we can state on the most reliable authority that the Carl Rosa Opera Company will pay a visit to the Prince's Theatre in a month or two, and that, for the first time, that famous body of artists will stay in Bristol for a fortnight, instead of a week as hitherto. The programme of operas to be represented has not yet been settled, but Meyerbeer's "Star of the North" will be included.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PIANOFORTE LEVER-KEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

SIR:—Your interesting note on the variation of key pressure, due to lever construction, induces me to submit the following considerations:—

I do not agree with those who think "the difference of pressure is scarcely worth mentioning," but, on the contrary, incline to the belief that it is precisely the differentiation of touch derivable from the lever form of key which will always be prized by the true artist, who is surely aware, instinctively or otherwise, of the advantages obtained by allowing the fingers to have contact with the upper, middle, or lower third of the key: the lower third, which we will for convenience call that portion nearest the player, giving, of course, when touched, the greatest impact.

It needs little brain-racking to invent a key that shall give the same result wherever struck, piano mechanism being practically limitless; and doubtless the music trades would hail with delight an opportunity for exercising legitimately their inventive faculties; but I fear the artists would not be so pleased with a machine which would, to my thinking, obviously stultify both their subtle brains and lissome fingers. Fancy Pachmann without a lever key-board! No, sir, let us keep and rejoice in the lever form of key, and the nuances of expression it allows. Mediocre players, with any form of mechanism, could not rise above their mediocrity, while great artists would be robbed of opportunities by an invention which, if adopted, I feel you would be the first to deplore.

Faithfully yours,

PHILIP H. NEWMAN.

South Hampstead, August 17th.

[We are quite unable to see the force of Mr. Newman's argument. What "advantages" are obtained by the inequalities in question? There is no tonal gradation to be derived from them which could not be produced with infinitely greater ease by varieties of pressure from the finger alone. That good pianists overcome the difficulty is undeniable; but what possible artistic advantage can result from triumph over a purely mechanical and probably unnecessary obstacle? "Training," we shall perhaps be told. We do not admit the validity of the plea; tonal gradation should depend upon variety of finger-pressure, not upon inequality in the amount of resistance to be overcome. At present the former is complicated by the necessity for continual readjustment. Mr. Newman writes as though it were always possible to choose the spot at which the finger should have contact with the key. As a matter of fact the fingers are constantly obliged to overcome pressure which they would rather avoid. Compare, for instance, an ordinary "five-finger exercise" in C with the same in E flat or G flat. No choice is here possible; the position of the thumb on the black key regulates the position of the other fingers.—Editor M. W.]

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL WORLD."

SIR: Will you kindly allow me space to correct an error in your otherwise admirable account of the Philadelphia meeting of the Music Teachers' National Association of America? You say that among the guests were "Mr. Edward Chadfield, of Derby, and Mr. John Towers, of Manchester, as representatives of the National Society of Musicians." This is not the case. Our Hon. General Secretary, Mr. E. Chadfield, was the only representative of the N.S.P.M., and we are delighted to find he "charmed everyone."

Mr. Towers is not a member of our society, so could not have been its representative. I fear yours is not the only journal that has introduced this mild dissonance, which I now so easily resolve.

With many thanks for your courtesy,

I remain, very truly yours,

ARTHUR F. SMITH, Mus.Bac.,

Acting for Hon. Gen. Sec. during his absence in America.

Derby, August 20, 1889.

The Dramatic World.

THE WILD EAST.

LONDON, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21st, 1889.

MY DEAR MR. FIELDMOUSE,—

Chancing the other day to visit a very fine and well-filled theatre, which stands in one of the most spacious and airy of London streets—twice the width of Regent-street, and flanked with pavements thrice as broad—I could not but reflect on the number of popular and prosperous theatres in our great city which are hardly known by name to the most regular "firstnighter" of the West-end, and which now contribute scarcely anything to dramatic literature. Yet they have great and constant audiences, and many of them are much more regularly successful than the West-end houses.

To take yourself, dear Mr. Fieldmouse, by way of "awful example:" what, with all your interest in the play, do you know of the great Britannia Theatre in Hoxton, the Pavilion in the splendid Whitechapel-road, the Grand over against the Angel Inn at Islington, or even the famous Surrey Theatre, or (since the days of Phelps) Sadler's Wells? Yet these are not all the theatres of North, South, and East London; there are also the vast Standard, in Shoreditch, Astley's in the Westminster Bridge-road, the "Elephant"—affectionately abbreviated of his Castle—and, in the far west, the Marylebone.

I suppose that the most prosperous theatre in all London is the Britannia, and its owner, Mrs. Lane, the wealthiest manageress. Year in, year out, for a time longer than gallantry permits me to name, she has commanded success in autumn, winter, spring, and even summer—her *clientèle* having an unconquerable objection to going to Switzerland or to Scotland for the three months which follow the season: and, indeed, being for the most part ignorant of the fact that there is a season, and just as willing to go to the play in August as in November, as long as the weather does not make the gallery at the "Brit" much hotter than the hottest room of a Turkish bath.

And during all these years Mrs. Lane has kept together a regular company of careful and capable actors, who know that an engagement at the Britannia is not for the run of the piece, or for a season of a few months, but may last all the year round for twenty years. At this rate, it is well worth while to accept a salary nominally lower than those paid further West; four pounds a week for fifty-two weeks in the year will much more than balance eight for perhaps twenty-six weeks, possibly less,—with all the expense and worry of advertising, in its many forms, the fact that you, Vyvyan Snoulkes, are the man and the only man to engage for "gentlemanly villains."

At the Surrey and the Marylebone there are also for the most part "stock companies;" but the Grand, the Pavilion, the Standard, are generally conducted like the modern provincial theatres, and are tenanted week after week by travelling companies which perform West-end successes or the most blood-curdling melodramas. The main differences between all these theatres and those further west are these:—

- (1) They depend upon local audiences.
- (2) Their prices are low. At the Grand the pit is a shilling, but at most of the others it is only sixpence.
- (3) The programmes are changed, for the most part, weekly.
- (4) The cost of scenery and "mounting" generally is very small; though things are as a rule done well and carefully.

Under such conditions, at least four of these outlying theatres seem to give the greatest satisfaction to a very great number of humble playgoers, who are well content to spend perhaps sixpence for their night's entertainment, and very nearly as much for the sustaining pie, the oranges, the beer, and the occasional luxury of gin or rum, consumed in the brief intervals between murder and matrimony on the stage and the fight in the gallery without which Saturday night, at least, would be incomplete.

And now, my dear Mr. Fieldmouse, I can imagine that you are inclined to ask me wherefore I bestow upon you all this valuable information as to the drama in Hoxton, Whitechapel, Islington, and the Borough. Do I desire you to visit Mrs. Lane's Temple of Thespis, or to sup full of the native horrors of Whitechapel?—where we may trust that the latest French melodrama, "Jack L'Eventreur," will never be brought upon the stage.

No, my dear sir; I only want to point out to you one notable fact of these latter days—that the East End or "transpontine" theatre has now *no drama of its own*. Shakespeare is played occasionally, by a travelling company—and generally, I think, with success—and "comedy-dramas" and comic operas from the West are sometimes seen here; but the staple fare of these audiences is of course melodrama. The fact that the East End does not write its own dramas nowadays would be less remarkable if it had borrowed its writers from the West—but the reverse is the truth. We have borrowed our dramatists from the East, and seem in no hurry to return them.

It is significant indeed that the great popular successes at Drury Lane, the Adelphi, the Princess's, have been of late years written by men who learned their art at the Grecian Theatre—now unhappily converted—and that these men by no means found it necessary to change their style in writing for the home of Garrick, to add culture or even grammar. They only connected a little more carefully the "sensations" on which their plays depend—and had much more expensive scenery painted for them.

No better test, indeed, of the probability that a strong drama will hit the taste of a Drury Lane audience need be applied, than to play it for a week at Whitechapel. If a man writes to make money nowadays, he writes to please the coster in the fourpenny gallery; if he wishes to make a dead certainty of failure, he writes a play that can be read by cultivated men.

This is, of course, to state the case in an extreme way; but, as a kind of counterblast to my optimism of last week, it is but fair to state a few of the difficulties which obstruct—now, perhaps, more than ever—the path of the higher drama.

Railway companies will tell you that it is the third class which pays best, the second which pays least; and these days of expensive scenery and dresses, the theatrical manager has to consider, first of all, "what will pay?" Burlesque and opera-bouffe will draw the first-class, the half-guinea stalls; high-class plays appeal chiefly to the second, the cultivated middle class; but your melodrama, stuffed with murders, finds its audience in every poor neighbourhood, east, west, south, and north, and in every rough manufacturing town or seaport through all the three kingdoms, and most of all in the vast masses of well-to-do half-cultivated playgoers in America.

These countless shillings, sixpences, fourpences, cry ever for murders, fights, and fires; and Messrs. Pettitt and Meritt used to supply them to the Grecian, the Oriental, and the Vic, and we of the West sat by and smiled in a superior fashion. But, behold, Messrs. Pettitt and Meritt have come west, and planted the flag of victory here. In adapting "Velvet and Rags, or the White Hand and the Black Thumb," to the needs of our refinement they have

not added literary merit—the last consideration with a popular audience—they have but studied probability a little, a very little more, and appealed to the fastidious West with a real cab-horse, a real waterfall, and some thousand-pounds' worth of revolving scenery.

Thus, my dear Mr. Fieldmouse, comes wisdom to us from the east, as of yore; and we accept it with scorn, and make the fullest use of it.

The moral of which is to be drawn from Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and not from your somewhat despondent
MUS IN URBE.

THE DRAMATISTS.

I.—ÆSCHYLUS.

First in time, among the world's great dramatists, stands the Titanic figure of Æschylus; and so slow is the progress of art that though nearly twenty-five centuries have passed since his birth, one dramatic poet only has yet risen above him, Shakespeare, the king of all.

And Æschylus had the spirit that Shakespeare lacked, that Milton in a measure possessed; he was more the ancient Hebrew than the Greek, in that he was prophet as well as poet. In those simpler times men went to the theatre for religion, for instruction; the audience which saw the "Prometheus" and the "Eumenides" was in some sort more like the mountain-congregation which now assembles at the Passion Play of Ober Ammergau, than the wits and groundlings of Elizabeth, or of the grand Louis, or of modern Paris or London.

And Æschylus was again like Milton in that he was the man of action as well the poet and prophet. His life of sixty-nine years, from B.C. 525 to 456, covered a memorable period in Greek history; and he took his share in it nobly. He fought with distinction at the great battles of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, and his first fame was that of a hero and patriot.

But the business of his life was poetry. He is said to have written seventy tragedies, besides satiric dramas; but only a tithe of them remains. He in truth created the Greek drama: "he was the first," it is said, "who converted monologue and soliloquy into action and dialogue. He introduced upon the stage more than one actor at the same time, and relieved the declamation of the Thespian orator by the musical performance of a chorus; he also introduced scenery."

So complete a creation of an art by one man would seem impossible; but it is at least certain that to Æschylus we owe the trilogy, the combination of three plays—each complete in itself—into one grand whole: the Shakespearean tragedy, in fact, but on a colossal scale.

Of the facts of the outward life of Æschylus we know little. About 471 he went to Sicily, and spent some time at the court of Hieron. Three years later, when he had returned to Athens, he was defeated by the younger tragedian, Sophocles. His last work was the Oresteian trilogy; soon after its performance he again retired to Sicily, and there died in 456.

The seven works which remain are the mighty "Prometheus Bound," the three parts of the great trilogy just named; and the "Persians" (acted in 472), the "Seven against Thebes," and the "Suppliants."

Our true knowledge of Æschylus comes mainly from the immortal "Prometheus" and "Agamemnon." The wild grandeur of their humanity stands out against the dark background of a religion which was in its essence fatalism. Beyond the gods, to whom the poet unceasingly teaches reverence and obedience, there is always Fate, the unchangeable. Prometheus, the martyr, is a higher figure than Zeus—who must yet be obeyed; but above both, past even the conception of duty and virtue, is still the Unknowable, the Foredoomed.

With this there is an intense sympathy with human suffering. The world's literature has hardly any pathos keener than that of the plaint of Cassandra. And the poetry of Isaiah, the lurid force of Carlyle, burn in the mighty verse of Æschylus, obscure, contorted, but tremendous and alive, never small and never common. The man's character is in every line of it: rugged, gigantic, proud—he was an aristocrat in all things—and above all things *real*: for ever face to face with the mystery and the reality of life and death.

We find in Æschylus and in Shakespeare the crowning proofs of the fact that the most real of poets are the most picturesque. As nothing in Pope makes an instant picture in one's mind, such as almost every line of Walt

Whitman calls up, so the careful dramatic work of Sophocles gives us no such magnificent memories as the Prometheus, the Agamemnon, the Eumenides. Not even in Shakespeare is anything grander than the lone figure of the Titan chained to that steep mountain side, nor the watchman on his high rock waiting for the signal-fire to flash its tidings across the night, nor the Furies asleep in their cavern, sniffing the scent of blood, hunting, like dogs, in their dreams.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The death of James Albery takes away perhaps the most highly gifted of our dramatists—certainly the one who had in his prime the highest power of imaginative and brilliant dialogue. His prime had long passed, though he was only a man of middle age, and in reckoning up the possibilities of the theatre of to-day one had ceased to take the work of Albery into account. Yet, as literary work, effective in the study as on the stage, what play of the last twenty years can compare with the "Two Roses?" Albery was a true poet and a true wit: had he but found some dramatist made of sterner stuff to play the Beaumont to his Fletcher—could he have joined forces with such a man as the late Tom Taylor—he might, under happier circumstances, have given us comedies worthy to stand beside the best of the modern French stage, of Augier and Dumas.

As it was, there were the rarest beauties scattered among all the works of Albery's best period; but, unhappily, no single play, after the "Two Roses," had quite the vigour or the completeness needed in a work which is to keep the stage. Yet his merits were not merely those of detail. Some of his characters are painted with masterly breath and vitality; no character in our modern drama, perhaps, stands out like his Digby Grant—marvellously played, of course, by Mr. Irving, yet only the best of a group of living portraits: "Our Mr. Jenkins," full of humour and truth; the bright, earnest boy of twenty years ago; the blind man, quietly but surely drawn. It was the story that Albery could never invent or control; here he needed a Tom Taylor or a Boucicault to plan and bind together his brilliant work.

The theatrical world will give the first sign of awaking from its brief mid-summer sleep next Tuesday, when at the Shaftesbury Theatre will be produced Mr. H. A. Jones's new play "The Middleman." This, like "Saints and Sinners," and to some extent like "Wealth," is a play of English middle-class life, and of a certain class of that middle-class: a study, one may say, after the school of George Eliot. One cannot but welcome anything like ambition in an English dramatist; one cannot fail to recognise ability in Mr. Jones's work—for the magazines; one cannot but see that he is a trained and practical dramatist. It is the sincerest wish of the earnest playgoer that Mr. Jones may for once fuse together his ambition, his ability, and his technical skill, and give us a play of which we may be justly proud.

M. Jacques Damala, known well as an actor of merit, but still better as the husband of Sarah Bernhardt, died on Sunday morning. He was a Greek by birth, who, on the failure of his father, entered the diplomatic service of his country, abandoning this in turn for the dramatic profession. He made his first appearance in Paris with Mme. Bernhardt in "La Dame aux Camélias," and afterwards, although possessed of no pre-eminent talent, did much useful work in such plays as "Le Maître des Forges," "Frou-Frou," and "Les Mères-Ennemis." He appeared at the Lyceum with his wife during the recent season.

One test of a man's true dramatic power is his lyric gift: the great Elizabethans were the greatest songwriters the world has ever known—the writing of a true song seems to demand precisely the intensity and the imagination that a great dramatist must have. Judged by this test, Albery stands high among our latterday playwrights. Here, for example, is a ballad from his charming comedy—his idyll of the orchard, rather—known as "Apple Blossoms:"

He was there, and I was there;
All that I remember now
Is the stillness of the air
And the blossom on the bough,
And the prudish beads I strung;
That was when the year was young.

He was true, and I was true;
All that now comes back to me
Is the yellow autumn hue
And the ripe fruit on the tree;
Nothing said, yet all was told,
When the year was growing old.

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FRAU AMALIE MATERNA

AS KUNDRY ("PARSIFAL," Act II. Sc. II.).

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